



**How to Start an  
Employee  
Commute-Benefits  
Program  
in Ten Easy Steps**

**February 2007**



*How you establish an Employee Commute Program depends on your type of business, the flexibility of your employees' work day, and your company's organizational and decision-making style. Key steps in starting a rideshare program include:*

- 1 Choose an Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC)**
- 2 Win management support**
- 3 Request Free 511 Rideshare Services**
- 4 Look at the big picture**
- 5 Identify objectives**
- 6 Design program**
- 7 Implement program**
- 8 Promote program**
- 9 Measure and Evaluate**
- 10. Expand & Improve!**



## **Step 1**

### **Choose an Employee Transportation Coordinator**

An Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) plays the role of analyst, problem solver, and spokesperson for your company's Commute-Benefit Program. An effective ETC is a:

- **Motivator:** is self-motivated and enthusiastic;
- **Facilitator:** works effectively with people at all levels of the organization—including management, employees and unions;
- **Problem Solver:** tailors a program to fit your company and work site using creative approaches and innovative solutions;
- **Designer:** frequently monitors and adjusts the program to meet the changing needs of your company and its employees;
- **Promoter:** markets the program to achieve maximum employee participation;
- **Communicator:** is receptive to suggestions and critiques, while developing, promoting and evaluating your program to ensure its success.

## **Step 2**

### **Win Management Support**

Management support is critical for a successful Commute-Benefit Program. Executives need to understand the dynamics between the company, the employees, and the program goals.

The Employee Transportation Coordinator needs to fully understand and support management expectations, as well. Keep management abreast of program activities on a regular basis to ensure its success.



### **Step 3**

#### **Request free 511 Rideshare Services**

511 Rideshare offers free programs and services for your company and your employees. Rideshare transportation consultants can assist with:

- Site assessments, such as employee transportation surveys and density mapping;
- greenhouse gas emissions calculations;
- Internet-based ride matching;
- Vanpool formation and vendors;
- Rideshare Rewards commute incentives;
- Promotional materials;
- Program development and consultations on: commuter-tax benefits, Guaranteed Ride Home, Shuttles, Telework, flexible-work hours, county incentives, staff training, and more.

### **Step 4**

#### **Look at the Big Picture**

As you design an employee commute program, consider the commuting needs of your employees, the special characteristics of your company, and transportation options in the area.

- How do your employees get to work?
- How far do they travel?
- Where do they live?
- What are their work schedules?
- What is the make-up of your work force?



- What are the transportation characteristics of your work site, including:
  - Road access;
  - Parking;
  - Transit availability;
  - Surrounding land use;
  - On-site amenities.

**Employee Attitudes:** Employee commute choices are based on travel times, cost, and convenience. Identify the services and incentives likely to persuade your employees to try alternatives to driving alone. And eliminate obstacles.

**Corporate Culture:** Be aware of the values that define your corporate environment and incorporate these into your program. You'll win support from both employees and management.

**Employee Trends and Patterns:** Check in regularly with employees to see how the program's working and what needs to change.

## Step 5

### Identify Your Objectives

Identify measurable targets to help you design the best program for your company. The management team might want to:

- Recruit and retain quality employees;
- Improve employee productivity;
- Reduce rush-hour congestion;
- Reduce CO<sup>2</sup> and greenhouse gas emissions;
- Reduce parking needs;
- Improve site utilization;
- Offer a low-cost employee benefit;
- Improve employee relations;
- Enhance community relations.



Decide what your company's objectives are, and use them to guide the development of your program and measure its outcome.

## **Step 6**

### **Design Your Program**

Once you understand the unique transportation needs of your work site, the commute preferences and patterns of your employees, and the underlying corporate culture, you can begin to design a program that meets your needs.

Consider including some of the following in your commute-benefit program:

- A ridematching service for carpools and vanpools;
- A guaranteed ride home program;
- Commuter tax benefits;
- Carpool incentives;
- Flexible work hours, such as a compressed work week, telecommuting;
- Preferential parking for carpools and vanpools;
- Bicycle facilities;
- Showers and other amenities for bicyclists and walkers.

Once you have designed a program, prepare a budget for management approval that includes facilities, equipment and materials; and necessary staff hours.

## **Step 7**

### **Implement Your Program**

- **Establish a schedule and timeline for your program's objectives that were identified in *Step 6***
- **Plan your implementation steps:**
  - Organize a company-wide kickoff;
  - Promote program through e-mail, newsletters, intranet, posters (*see Step 8*);



- Encourage employee enrollment into the 511 RideMatch database;
- Initiate commuter benefits and other incentives;
- Designate on-site carpool and vanpool parking spots;
- Monitor program performance and gather feedback (*see Step 9*).
- **Establish key agency and company contacts from:**
  - Commuter Benefits Administration;
  - Local transit agencies;
  - 511 Rideshare;
  - Facilities Development (for preferred parking and shuttle bus service).
- **Collect transportation materials from 511 Rideshare and link your Intranet to Web sites, such as:**
  - 511.org;
  - Local Bus and Light Rail;
  - BART;
  - Capitol Corridor, Amtrak;
  - Altamont Commuter Express (ACE);
  - Caltrain;
  - Ferries;
  - Local Bicycle Coalitions.

## **Step 8**

### **Promote Your Program**

Cultivate employee participation! Ask around—find employees who use commute alternatives and ask them to help you spark an interest in co-workers. Jump start your promotion with these marketing tactics:

- Distribute a letter from the CEO encouraging employee participation;
- Advertise the program through fliers, posters, e-mail and company newsletters;



- Hold transportation events, or invite rideshare experts to health and environmental fairs;
- Give out prizes, free food, raffle tickets, and more to encourage participation;
- Display a zip code map showing where employees live and highlight areas good for walking, bicycling, transit, carpools and vanpools;
- Incorporate 511 Rideshare information in your company's recruitment and orientation packet;
- Start a regular commute column in your employee newsletter;
- Schedule special events for program participants such as occasional lunches and t-shirt giveaways;
- Stock a permanent display with commute brochures and hand-outs.

## **Step 9**

### **Measure and Evaluate**

Ongoing measurement is crucial to a successful program. Note participation, employee feedback, and costs. Determine those commute-benefit programs that work best and those that don't. Tracking allows you to evaluate your program, gauge its cost-effectiveness and exceed your objectives.

- **Participation Rate**  
Post a visible display announcing individual and program achievements to increase awareness and involvement.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions**  
Measure your program's impact on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reductions with the 511 Rideshare greenhouse-gas emissions calculator. Fewer cars means fewer noxious emissions and a reduced impact on global warming.
- **Employee Feedback**  
Periodic surveys provide invaluable employee feedback on program strengths and weaknesses.



▪ **Program Cost**

Keep records that identify costs, such as:

- Administration — Staff and overhead;
- Marketing and Promotion — Materials and events;
- Incentives — Items or benefits provided;
- Capital & Miscellaneous — One-time expenditures and improvements.

**Step 10**

**Expand and Improve!**

**Based upon your program evaluation and employee feedback, you may want to expand the commute benefits you offer. Have employees requested bicycle racks? If it's cost-effective, add them! It helps you attract and retain top talent.**

**A rideshare program is organic, constantly changing to meet the needs of employees. Let 511 Rideshare Employer Services Representatives help you create new and exciting programs based on your unique company goals and corporate culture.**

**Get started today! Call 511—and say “Rideshare” to speak with the representative for your county.**